

## Message Text

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15

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSC-10

PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 CPR-02 OPR-02 SY-10 AID-20

M-03 A-01 USSS-00 IO-13 EB-11 SCA-01 RSR-01 /154 W

----- 075187

O R 301020 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY SANAA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2214

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

CINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANAA 949

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: YE, YS, PGOV, PINS

SUBJECT: YEMENI LEADER ASSASSINATED

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

1. SUMMARY. ASSASSINATION MORNING MAY 30 OF ONE OF YARG' S MOST RESPECTED SENIOR LEADERS, AND AN ONLY COINCIDENTALLY- FOILED ATTEMPT ON LIFE OF PRESIDENT, REFLECT THE FUNDAMENTAL VULNERABILITY OF NORTH YEMEN TO ATTACK AND SUBVERSION FROM PDRY. ACTION RECOMMENDED: MESSAGE OF

CONDOLENCE FROM SECRETARY TO YAR FOREIGN MINISTER. END SUMMARY.

2. REPUBLICAN COUNCIL MEMBER MUHAMMAD ALI UTHMAN WAS ASSASSINATED IN TAIZ AT 0630 LOCAL MAY 30 WHILE ON WAY TO CALL ON PRESIDENT IRYANI. DETAILS LACKING  
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BUT ATTACK WAS APPARENTLY BY MACHINE GUN. FURTHER REPORT ON CIRCUMSTANCES WILL FOLLOW.

3. UTHMAN WAS VENERATED ELDER STATESMAN, A SHAFI' I WHO REPRESENTED SOUTHERN YAR INTERESTS ( HE WAS FORMERLY HEAD OF LOOSELY ORGANIZED MADHIJ TRIBAL CONFEDERATION) AT HIGHEST LEVELS OF YARG. ( REPUBLICAN COUNCIL OF THREE MEMBERS CURRENTLY INCLUDES PRESIDENT AND PRIME MINISTER, AND IS CONSTITUTIONALLY YARG' S HIGHEST EXECUTIVE BODY. UTHMAN WAS GENERALLY TREATED AS VICE PRESIDENT OF YAR.) UTHMAN WAS A CLOSE CONFIDANT OF PRESIDENT IRYANI ALTHOUGH HE DIFFERED WITH LATTER ON SOME ASPECTS OF POLICY. ON APPROACH TO PDY, UTHMAN FAVORED STRONG LINE AGAINST SUBVERSION AND IN INNER YARG COUNCILS WAS IN A QUIET WAY AN ACTIVIST WHO BALANCED IRYANI' S TENDENCY TO AVOID CONFRONTATION WHEN IN FACE STRONG PROVOCATION. IN FACT, IT WAS IN ALL PROBABILITY UTHMAN' S POSITION AS THE REEMINENT SHAFI' I WITHIN YARG AND ADVOCACY OF FIRMNESS AGAINST SOUTH WHICH MADE HIM IDEAL TARGET IN TERMS OF EFFORT WEAKEN SHAFI' I LEADERSHIP AND UNDERMINE SHAFI' I- ZAYDI COOPERATION IN CONFRONTING SUBVERSION MOUNTED FROM ADEN.

4. ASSASSINATION HAS CREATED PROFOUND SENSE OF SHOCK IN COUNTRY, NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF GREAT AFFECTION FOR UTHMAN BUT BECAUSE OF AUTOMATIC ASSUMPTION THAT PDY WAS BEHIND THIS AND WILL BE OUT FOR FURTHER VICTIMS. ( DEP PRIMIN/ FONMIN NU' MAN HAD TOLD US IN CONFIDENCE LAST WEEK OF GOVERNMENT' S ACCIDENTAL DISCOVERY OF PLOT TO ASSASSINATE PRESIDENT IRYANI DURING FIRST WEEK OF JUNE .) SANAA RADIO IS CURRENTLY BROADCASTING PLEDGE THAT REVENGE WILL BE TAKEN AGAINST TERRORISTS AND DESTRUCTIVE ELEMENTS. REFERENCE TO PDY IS CLEAR ALTHOUGH IT NOT MENTIONED BY NAME. STRONG SECURITY EVIDENT IN SANAA FOLLOWING KILLING. YAR CLOSING OFFICES AND PRIVATE BUSINESSES FOR THREE DAYS OF MOURNING. EMBASSIES HAVE BEEN ASKED LIMIT ACTIVITIES TO ESSENTIAL BUSINESS.

5. AMBASSADOR HAS CONVEYED HIS PERSONAL CONDOLENCES TO FONMIN FOR PASSAGE TO PRESIDENT.

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6. ACTION RECOMMENDED: THAT MESSAGE FROM SECRETARY ON BEHALF USG BE CONVEYED THROUGH EMBASSY TO FONMIN NU' MAN. YARG REGARDS SECRETARY AS SPECIAL FRIEND OF YEMEN AND WOULD APPRECIATE SUCH A GESTURE. CRAWFORD

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NMAFVVZCZ

\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* n/a

\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* CONFIDENTIAL

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**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** golinofr  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
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**TAGS:** PGOV, PINS, YE, YS  
**To:** AMMAN  
BEIRUT  
CINCEUR  
JIDDA  
KUWAIT  
LONDON  
NEA

SECSTATE WASHDC

TEHRAN

**Type:** TE

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